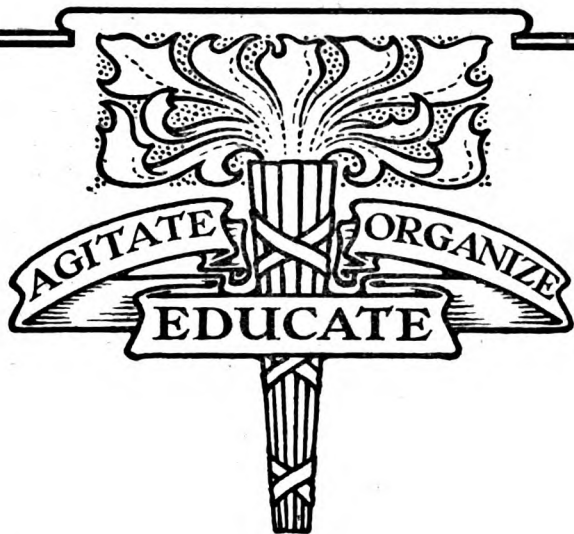


Vol. IX, No. 10

November, 1917.

The
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MAGAZINE



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THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

"I can promise to be candid but not impartial."

Vol. IX.

November, 1917.

No. 10

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"The Ferment of Revolution"

WE referred briefly last month to the *Times'* articles with the above title. We do not propose, having read the articles again in the interval, to waste our all too limited space in lengthy quotation from, or comment on, these (for the most part) dull and dreary repetitions of the same old insults to Labour which one expects from the "special correspondents" Northcliffe hires—whether in Petrograd or London. One or two points are worthy of mention—and then we can get on with our work.

The *Times* quite evidently realises the importance of Education. It has been pondering over the South Wales Industrial Unrest-Commissioners' Report. "The revolutionary ferment . . . has its stronghold in the intellectually inclined young men and women of the well-paid wage-earning class. . . . They are, to a man, disciples of Karl Marx, and they look upon society as sharply divided

into two classes, Capitalists and Proletariat. . . . They are theorists who preach the doctrine of education, of work, of action." The "special correspondent," in fact—though he mentions no names—quite obviously had the *Plebs*, among other things, in front of him as he wrote; he quotes from Newbold's *Politics of Capitalism* the "crusaders of commodities" passage quoted by Eden and Cedar Paul in our September issue—abridged in precisely the same way as they abridged it. We suspect, also, that we are one of the "petty magazines" referred to in another passage. (Why so much fuss about "*petty magazines*" and "*obscure revolutionaries*"?)

We will pass over the childish rubbish about the aims of the Labour movement in general, and of the "obscure revolutionaries" in particular, being "that the whole machinery of capitalistic civilization—ships, railways, docks, and factories—should be destroyed as a blot upon God's fair world"—and turn to the saner statement (in the leading article, September 25th):—"Behind the meaningless and stupid term, 'labour unrest,' lies a conscious revolutionary movement which aims at the complete overthrow of the existing economic and social order, not in some uncertain future, but here and now." We are glad that the *Times* has at last realised that fact. It will have to realise further that that "conscious revolutionary movement" is—the British Labour movement, and not any "obscure" section of it. The newly-drafted Objects of the Labour Party include the following:—

To secure for the producers . . . the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production.

That is what "the intellectually inclined young men and women of the wage-earning class" are aiming at. That is why they are, "to a man, disciples of Karl Marx." That is why they "preach the doctrine of education," and preach it (which is what frightens the *Times*) to ever-increasing audiences. The revolutionary movement in this country—growing more "conscious" daily—is the organised Labour Movement. Our business, as Plebs-C.I.C.'ers, is to help on the growth of its "consciousness." Our task is merely to remind Labour that—"not in some uncertain future, but here and now"—it can, if it *wills*, as Mark Starr observes on another page of this issue, turn our British Imperialists into rebel Korniloffs (they would love to imitate their hero!) and suppress the *Times* as a revolutionary organ.

Get on with the Classes.

WANTED.—A few copies of *Plebs* for September (1917). Also copies of October, 1915. Anyone sending same to Sec., Plebs League, will be rewarded by the consciousness of having been very obliging.

Karl Liebknecht on Anti-Militarism

To-day the concern of princes and peoples must be to live, and not to fall a prey to that class of proletarians who pursue aims they neither can nor will allow, persons who desire always to destroy and never to create. Francis, Emperor of Austria, in a despatch to Louis, King of Bavaria, October 9th, 1830.

The special danger of militarism has been shown. The proletariat is faced by a robber armed to the teeth, whose ultimatum is not 'Your money or your life,' but 'Your money AND your life,' so that even robber morality is outdone.—KARL LIEBKNECHT, 1907.

IN the first of the *Times* articles on "The Ferment of Revolution" (September 25th, 1917), there is reproduced a purple passage from Walton Newbold's pamphlet, *The Politics of Capitalism*. We need not reprint the passage here, for it will be found on p. 175 of the September *Plebs* (from which "petty magazine," and not from the original pamphlet, one gathers that the *Times* writer lifted it). Our immediate interest is in the comment. Such doctrines, says the *Times*, "are totally irreconcilable with the efficient conduct of any war." Precisely! That is our contention. On p. 89 of *Militarism and Anti-Militarism*,* commenting on the failure of *The Communist Manifesto* to deal specifically with militarism, or adequately with its accessory significance, Karl Liebknecht writes:

One could almost say that the programme of the first measures to be taken under the dictatorship of the proletariat contains nothing laid down with special reference to militarism: the conquest of political power, which is here supposed to have been already brought about, embraces the "conquest," that is to say, the overthrow of militarism.

May we interpolate, in passing, that we do not share Newbold's enthusiasm for that phrase, "the dictatorship of the proletariat"? To dictate is as repugnant to the truly civilised human being as to be dictated to. "Power, like a desolating pestilence . . ." On this matter we prefer the words of Wilhelm Liebknecht:—

The political power which the social democracy aims at . . . has not for its object the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, but the suppression of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Just as the class-struggle which the proletariat carries on is only a counter struggle in self-defence, to resist the class-struggle of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat; and the end of this struggle by the victory of the proletariat will be the abolition of the class struggle in every form.—*No Compromise.* (Kerr, Chicago, 1915, p. 30).

Eminently natural, seeing that militarism is one of the main pillars of the class State, is the reaction of that State against anti-militarist propaganda. Karl Liebknecht's book was suppressed in Germany on its first publication ten years ago. In October, 1907, the author was convicted of high treason and sentenced to eighteen

* Karl Liebknecht, *Militarism and Anti-Militarism*. Translated by A. Sirniss. (Socialist Labour Press, 50, Kenfrew Street, Glasgow. Cloth, 2s.; paper 1s.)

month's imprisonment in a fortress. In Paris, two years earlier, Gustave Hervé and twenty-five others had, for anti-militarist propaganda, been condemned to terms of imprisonment totalling thirty-six years. One of the most judicious features of Karl Liebknecht's book is his temperate criticism of "Hervéism"—penned, it must be remembered, many years before the war, many years before *La Guerre Sociale* became *La Victoire*, before Hervé was deservedly nicknamed General Weathercock. But Liebknecht, "the tower that stood foursquare to all the winds that blew," is again under duress.

We owe much to Sirmis and the Socialist Labour Press for making his book available in English. An edition of ten thousand has already been exhausted, and a still larger one, we understand, is in the press. Were it not for the space limits imposed by an inexorable editor, its arguments might be discussed at some length, but we have been strictly enjoined to be sparing in outward flourishes. Suffice it to say that the work is of great value as a history of the socialist anti-militarist movement, as a discussion of the relationship of anti-militarism to socialist education and to the young socialist movement, and, above all, as an examination of the respective philosophies of militarism and anti-militarism. Especially judicious is the chapter on "Anti-Militarist Tactics." The passage on p. 87 dealing with "Difficulties of a Proletarian Revolution" may also be strongly recommended to all persons of an unduly sanguine temperament.

Liebknecht is quite sympathetic in his attitude towards Hervéism (old style), Tolstoyanism, conscientious objection, and similar manifestations of individual resistance to militarism. He considers them ineffective, on the whole, because anarchistic. Yet this must not be interpreted as meaning that he crudely condemns anarchism, for he obviously regards anarchism as an essential element in the socialist criticism of life. The aim of the social democrat, however, he says, is "to effect a gradual organic disintegration and demoralisation of the militarist spirit." It is here, perhaps, that his work lacks grip. He has not found the key to unlock this door. But he wrote ten years ago, and if he survives his imprisonment he may well find something more strongly constructive to say when the war is over. He could learn a good deal (if he has not independently discovered it) from the movement which finds expression in the Plebs League. Meanwhile, for the reasons given, and still more for the warning it conveys that the main dangers of militarism are its anti-socialist educative influence and the power it gives the class state to divide the proletariat in order to rule, *Militarism and Anti-Militarism* may be heartily commended to all Plebeians.

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL,

Why Not ?

WHEN advocating to labour organizations the urgent need of providing classes in social science, one is constantly met with the argument : *Why not get your classes run by the Education Authority, the County Council and the State ?* Now is there anything in this point worthy of consideration ? Perhaps my arguments for and against may provoke a helpful discussion and a pooling of experiences. Let me stress the fact that I appreciate the true *class* nature of the State, its origin and its end ; also that in many districts the Councils are so openly anti-Labour as to settle the question immediately. Again, to him who disowns political action of any sort, the query is an idle one.

Yet, there *are* Councils in which Labour members are already in the majority. (I am not here concerned with the failure of many present Labour members, who have become lost in " gas-and-water politics," and have gratified their itch for petty municipal dignities by becoming " respectable." A constant stream of men from the class to the lodge room will alter that in the future.) Is it not possible that just as the squire and the vicar, through the Local Education Committee have dominated—and still dominate—the teachers and the teaching in the village school, so, in the future, the nominees of the Labour Union upon such Committees may use a similar influence ? And, instead of the schoolmaster being a cheap church organist, he may be a Socialist agitator who in school will be able to talk more about the history of the working-class and less about kings ; and instead of being used to uphold the *status quo*, be used to undermine it ? (To this end Plebeians, wherever they have power, should insist upon the reinstatement of C.O. teachers—an item significantly absent from W.E.A. proposals of reform.)

However, while hoping that the mental labourers producing the commodity of general education will, like other labourers, rapidly rise to the control of their own industry through their organization, let us turn to the question proper—the advisability, or otherwise, of getting classes of adults, specialising in social science, established through the Education Committee, wherever the *personnel* of the latter is good from our Plebeian point of view.

Reasons for :—

(1) **The Advantage of " Boring from Inside."**—Readers are invited to make parallels with the successfully proceeding transformation, under English conditions, of the craft into the industry union. We know that revolution is only the culmination of gradual evolution. The transference of power from the Westminster " talking shop " to the Trade Union Congress, from the Town to the Trade Union Council, and so on, will not be an abrupt jump, but a prolonged process. Expediency and opportunism are to be attacked only when they are based upon false fundamental prin-

ciples, *e.g.*, when a Socialist bases the future society upon the *consumer's* need. Ways and means have to be applied in the *here and now* in order to attain the desired *end*. Therefore, why not use the provision in the State's Education Bill to obtain support for your class?

(2) **The Advantage of Securing Suitable Buildings, Payment for Teacher, etc.**—This may be described as a kind of "spoiling the Egyptians." Again, there is the psychological factor to be considered and utilised; for by the majority of the working-class the schools are recognised and accepted as the centres of education.

(3) **"The Paying of the Piper and the Calling of the Tune"** **Argument.**—The working class has to pay the education rate, among others. Is it, then, going to be content to train men in the evening schools to become useful only to the capitalist class? There is something ironical in a Labour member, paid by his local miners' lodge, in the course of his duties supervising classes which aim at assisting miners to become masters' officials.

Reasons against:—

(1) **Danger of Losing Independence.**—Compromise might arise through loss of freedom in choosing teacher and textbooks and Syllabus; also by the supervision of inspectors. This again would depend upon the composition of the Education Committee, which has a certain amount of local autonomy. Suppose fifteen Bristol Plebeians had formed a class in Economics, selected their teacher and their Syllabus, and decided to get their class recognised by the Education Authority. If Councillor Brown was in the chair of the Education Committee, would he reject *Capital* as being out of date as a text-book; and if he were sufficiently supported, would not the recognition and support of the Committee be won? (Here, of course, it might be argued, that for one social science class started, the Labour Councillor would have to help with many technical science classes. But here again there might be opportunity for influence; for, once the proper relation between technical and social science is understood, then on all and every occasion the need of the latter to working-class enjoyment of the benefits of the former could be pointed out. The aim would be to break down the snobbery of the skilled expert and the narrow outlook of the manual worker, and to provide the clean-collar brigade with a knowledge of its true relation to other workers.)

(2) **Only Temporary Support would be Secured.**—Stoppage of grant from the Central body might result from the visit of the Education Board's inspector, and might be challenged by the local body. One teacher recommends allowing the *students* to educate the inspector in the most correct and up-to-date theoretical interpretation of economic facts—*i.e.*, the Marxian one—when he calls. The relative nature of truth would then probably be soon discovered.*

* "And what will the inspector do *then*, poor thing?"—Ed.

If suspension of grant followed complaints—and even W.E.A. “rebel” teachers have been found fault with—then the controversy would serve as an advertisement, and the Trades’ Council of the town or district could still maintain a class.

The moral seems to be that circumstances alter cases; that Plebeians should make use of classes in social science whether run by the Co-operative Union, the Urban District or County Council, propagandist Socialist parties, or even the W.E.A., in order to push the need for independence in that branch of knowledge; and that they shall previously get a thorough grip of their own case, no longer sitting open-mouthed before men with alphabetically decorated names, but “giving them hell” (as the poet—or the Premier—more forcefully than politely put it) when occasion demands.

Good sense must be left to decide the course of action in particular circumstances, and whether the answer to the question with which we set out shall be Yes or No. We need the courage—and the brains—to capture every possible avenue of education. There is no reason why, circumstances permitting, we should not force our British Imperialists to become rebel Korniloffs, and suppress the *Times* as a revolutionary organ! MARK STARR.

THE CENTRAL LIBRARY FOR STUDENTS.

Our friend, Geo. Mason (N.U.R.) sends us particulars of the Central Library for students, 20, Tavistock Square, London, W.C. 1., and suggests that this institution might be of great value to class-leaders and teachers. Its object is “to secure that no student shall be hindered in his or her studies by inability to obtain the necessary books.” No catalogue of the Library is, as yet, issued, but if applicants will state clearly the special book or books they need, every effort will be made to meet their requirements. The function of the Library is to lend the larger and more expensive “standard works” rather than text-books and smaller books of moderate price; and it is here that it should be particularly useful to class-leaders, who might be glad to have the opportunity of referring to a book which might be beyond their means to purchase. Borrowers have, of course, to pay cost of carriage; application forms, and all particulars, can be obtained from the Librarian (address above). The Library is supported by voluntary contributions.

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The Bishop's Move

IT is safe to say that, as a general rule, Plebeians are not much interested in bishops. Some recent utterances of the Bishop of Exeter, however, fully justify an exception being made in his case. His attitude of mind regarding conscientious objectors is at once so quaint, so naive, and so entirely characteristic of the mentality of his class, that something more than a passing reference to his views becomes quite irresistible.

I trust I shall not be accused of irreverence for seeing a close analogy between bishops and—duckmoles. The duckmole, as students of Evolution will recall, forms a connecting link between reptiles and mammals. Individually, they are insignificant little creatures, but science has invested them with the greatest importance, as affording valuable evidence to the truth of biological evolution. They are rare specimens, inhabiting quiet backwaters, far removed, as it were, from the fierce struggle for life; of interest only as examples of life-forms in an age long gone by; wittily described as "living fossils." Little reflection is required to see that this brief description of the duckmole is also applicable to a bishop. To the student of bygone social forms, these men have a relative importance. Time was when a frown on the face of some mitred prelate made the whole world tremble. Now those days have passed, and bishops only survive in our midst as—"living fossils."

The Bishop of Exeter, then—"Lord William Cecil"—a lord, a bishop, and—a Cecil! One is tempted to conjure up the part such a man would have played in pre-Reformation days; but space forbids. To-day he can only write letters to the *Times*, when his predecessors would joyfully have burned or beheaded.* The episcopal gorge has risen, it appears, at the sight of the hapless "C.O.'s" incarcerated at Dartmoor. They sing the "Red Flag," they "hatch revolutionary plots," and, above all, they—or some of them—base their conscientious objections to killing or being killed by Germans, not upon religious, but upon moral grounds. They have committed further crimes, but those cited will suffice to justify the Christian wrath of my Lord of Exeter. Logic and tolerance are alike absent from his fulminations. Exeter Cathedral may ring with "Te Deums" expressing the bishop's moral convictions, but the "Internationale" or the "Red Flag" must not be heard at Dartmoor. And yet is not tolerance still claimed as a Christian virtue?

*But he is prepared to have his "burning and beheading" done for him vicariously, and suggests (in a most Christ-like fashion) that non-religious C.O.'s should be placed, without protection, where they are likely to be bombed by German raiders. One might have had a sort of respect for his predecessors, but— . . . (Ed.)

Moreover, "C.O.'s" are not the only people who have been charged with "hatching revolutionary plots." The catacombs at Rome and the dungeon of Philippi, in which certain earlier revolutionaries sang "rebel songs" at the most unseemly hour of midnight, bear witness to this fact. These rebel singers also had conscientious objections to obeying the mandates of the State. Had he lived in those days, Lord William would—one charitably assumes—have had the courage to share their views and actions, with the consequent penalties. The Bishop has difficulty in understanding how a man can have a moral basis for his convictions, apart from religion. Yet it is possible to conceive of our prelate himself having moral and political objections, as "a patriot," to fighting on behalf of his Imperial namesake, the Emperor William.

What, then, is the underlying reason for the unrelenting hostility shown by members of the governing class to pacifists and revolutionists of all kinds? The answer can be given in one word—*fear*. They instinctively recognise that these men and women are the historic grave diggers of the present social system. Those people, whose most powerful convictions find expression in songs like "The Red Flag," have discarded every atom of ruling class ideology with contempt and scorn. Neither abuse, imprisonment, torture or death can break their spirit, or make them swerve from the path that leads to the international solidarity of the workers. Moreover, the revolutionary movement which has been stimulated by war-conditions, is merely the prelude to that vaster movement which must inevitably arise as the workers, through the propaganda of independent working-class educational theories, realise what capitalism means to them, and consciously organise for its overthrow. Hence the futile rage of the episcopal duckmole.

H. WYNN-CUTHBERT.

A sentence or two from Earl Russell's letter in the *Daily News* (October 18th) headed "A Bishop's Conscience," are too good not to quote here:—"In plain English, what the Bishop means is that conscientious views founded on some kind of supernatural belief are deserving of respect, while similar views founded on reason are deserving of no respect. This is the attitude which rationalists have always ascribed to the Church, but few Churchmen are so rash as to give away the position so completely as does my Lord of Exeter."

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A WORKER LOOKS AT HISTORY.

—that being the title Mark Starr has chosen for his *Outlines of Industrial History*, originally published in the *Merthyr Pioneer*. It will be uniform in size and style with Craik's *Modern Working-Class Movement*, but will contain about 180 pp., and will be published at 1s. It will have a Foreword by GEO. BARKER, one of the "old guard," introducing the work of one of the "boys." Our printer is doing his best to get this out during December. But, as hinted above, a big part of the bill must be paid before than date. *We want guarantees from classes, and from individuals; and we want cash, now.* We can't get the book out to time unless we have your support. We know we can sell this 5,000, and it should leave us a margin over for further ventures. We ask any Plebeian who can do so to help us face the financial responsibility of this undertaking by advancing us—on loan—any sum of money, to be repaid as soon as the book is published. We ask individuals to order, and pay for, their copies now; the price, before publication, is 1s., *postpaid*; after publication postage will be charged extra. We ask the classes everywhere to send us orders now, also with cash; a reduction in price for quantities will be announced later. We intend to do our utmost to get the book out promptly; but this—owing to the conditions above referred to—depends on *your* help. May we hear from you at once?

As you'll note from advt. on p. 2 of cover, our two leaflets, *How to Form a Social Science Class* and *Short Study Outlines* are now ready. These should be of real value to new classes, and C.I.C.'ers everywhere will find them fine propaganda. A good sale for these will help find the necessary funds for Mark Starr's book. *Verb. sap.* 2s. 6d. will bring you 50 of each by return post—cheap enough!

Then there's Ablett's *Easy Outlines of Economics*. We want to get busy on this, and Ablett is at work revising and rewriting. But it'll have to be one thing at a time. Help us to get Mark Starr's book safely under way, and we can at once proceed with Ablett's. The bills for printing these books run into three figures (of pounds), you know. And the Plebs is not a goldmine! We'll do our share if you'll do yours; so just start in on some book-cavassing in your branch, workshop, or committee.

We've added an item to our list since last month. Fred Shaw's *Syllabus and Book List* on

MARXISM: FUNDAMENTALS OF SOCIAL EVOLUTION,

drawn up for the Huddersfield, Halifax, and Sheffield Classes, is so good that we've ordered a supply for ourselves—for Plebeians in other districts, that is. You'll find a description of this *Syllabus* in "Bookshelf" this month; and some comments of Fred Shaw's own in "News of the Movement." Every Plebeian should have a copy. Price 3d. (post paid, 3½d.).

Lastly, THAT pamphlet, *What does Education Mean to the Workers?*, is still going well. Since last month the greater part of what was left of the 2nd edition has been sold. Now what about a 3rd edition? It depends on you! Don't send along for a parcel in about six weeks' time, only to be informed that we're "sorry—out of print." Send the order now—and get your T.U. branch to order some. Then we'll put that 3rd edition in hand.

WINIFRED HORRABIN (*Sec.*).

Correspondence

DURHAM MINERS AND EDUCATION.

SIR,—Twice within the last two years, on the recommendation of their E.C., a grant of £50 has been made to the W.E.A. by the Durham Miners. Many of those who have been attending C.L.C. classes (which are rapidly increasing and multiplying) now consider that the C.L.C. ought to be given a trial; and even some members of the E.C. have expressed that opinion.

A fortnight ago the North of England Branch of the C.L.C. asked the E.C. to allow a deputation to place their case before them. Not even a reply was forthcoming, but the C.L.C. branch has been informed that their request was ruled out of order.

Consistency never being one of the strong points of "advanced miners' leaders," these same gentlemen at their next meeting decided to allow Mr. MacTavish, of the W.E.A., to state a case before them! It is to be assumed that he will be seeking the help of the Elders of the Temple in staying the pernicious C.L.C. education, lest their members understand why it is that Durham lags behind in the miners' movement.

The humour of it is that some of the E.C. favour the C.L.C. point of view, while those who do not would like "to be fair to both sides." Their conception of "fairness" apparently consists in hearing one side and ignoring the other.

Yours, &c., EX-FORWARDITE.

We can hardly believe that the rank and file of the D.M.A. would be in sympathy with their E.C.'s idea of "fairness." Surely they will have something to say on the matter? We understand that a resolution in favour of a grant of £50 to the C.L.C. appears on the agenda of the next E.C. Meeting. It is up to every Durham miner who believes that "fair's fair" (to say nothing of other aspects of the question) to see that that resolution goes through. The hard and unselfish work put in by the North of England C.L.C.'ers deserves at least that measure of "recognition" from the D.M.A.—ED., *Plebs*.

REFORM PROGRAMMES.

DEAR COMRADE,—In going over my October *Plebs* I find two articles with which I don't agree, viz., "Miners' Reform Movement in Lanarkshire" and "S.W.M.F. Unofficial Reform Programme." If I understand the teaching of the Plebs movement to be that of Marxian economics, how comes it that we have matter in the *Plebs* boosting up reform? Surely we have had reform enough under capitalism, and no reforms obtainable before the present system is overthrown will be of any use to the working-class. J. D. McDougall tells us that a vast number of De Leon pamphlets have been circulated in Lanarkshire; surely they could not have been read properly, or we should not have the workers in that district going in for more reform. . . .

I am surprised to learn of the S.W.M.F. going in for more reforms. No doubt their demands are a long way ahead of any previously made so far as increase of wages or reduction of hours are concerned. But surely, in view of the mental food the S.W.M.F. miners have been fed on for some time back, they should have been going in for the "take and hold" policy.

How long are we going to fritter away our time in drawing up these "reform" programmes? I say let us do more to get Social Science Classes

established everywhere, and thereby let the workers know what Capitalism is and how to abolish it by taking up the right sort of political and industrial action, with a view to the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth.

Yours for Revolution, *not* Reform, BONNIE SCOTLAND.

Our correspondent can scarcely have read his Marx "properly," or he would not make such a wild statement as that "no reforms obtainable before the present system is overthrown will be of any use to the working-class." However, this is irrelevant as regards the main point of his letter. The Lanarkshire and South Wales "Reform" movements are not out for reforms in the sense in which he uses the word. Their aim is so to reform *their own organizations* as to make "the right sort of political and industrial action possible." One of their methods is the establishment of Social Science Classes. Our correspondent seems to have taken fright at the word "reform," and read the articles no further than the titles.—ED., *Plebs*.

PLEBS PUBLICATIONS—PROMPTITUDE, PLEASE.

SIR,—I am more than glad to see that the Plebs' Publishing Department is getting busy, and particularly so when I look down your list of forthcoming books and pamphlets.

But may I express the hope that those responsible will see to it that these publications are forthcoming with all possible promptitude? Experience has taught me—quite recently, too—that this is a point to which Labour-publishers do not always pay sufficient attention. And it is annoying—not to say harmful to the cause—to have a class, formed to study a certain text-book, kept waiting week after week for a whole session, and finally dispersed without ever having caught a glimpse of it.

I trust the Plebs is going to set a new (and much-needed) example in this respect.

Yours hopefully, B. F.

The Plebs Publishing Department, *if Plebeians rally to its support*, will certainly do its utmost to set that example. We only regret that such cases as that hinted at by our correspondent have made our own work more difficult—since our supporters ("once bitten, twice shy") may be tempted to delay their orders until a particular publication is actually ready. If they *do*, they will *delay* publication, for printing has to be paid for "step by step" these days; and unless Plebeians, trusting to our word, send us cash in advance, work on the publications in question must necessarily be held up.—ED., *Plebs*.

MARK STARR'S "ECONOMIC POT-POURRI."

SIR,—If my critics had looked up the meaning of "pot-pourri," space in the *Plebs* might have been saved—more especially as they neither criticise nor praise the book in question, nor attempt to refute my comments.

So far as the mixing of humility and confidence is concerned, let me assure them that I had no wish to affect the 'umbleness of Uriah Heep, but to express the fact that I was unfamiliar with other works of the same character; and, therefore, had no standards of comparison. I approached the book as a student, certain portions of it turned me into a critic, and I suggest that my criticism was just.

Like R.J.S.S.E. I bought the book "on the recommendations of two well known Plebeians, one of whom devotes himself chiefly to the study of Econ-

mcs. . . .” In addition the Contents Table looked attractive. Afterwards the discovery was made that the person giving the “written recommendation” had neither read, nor even purchased, the book. The salesman—George Washington would have made a poor salesman!—concealed this last fact. Hence, though I refused personally to give a written recommendation to a book I had not read, I gave the salesman the address of several class members. Apparently the writers of the letter were included among those whom this gentleman, solving his bread and butter problem, “worked on the cross.”

Learning how extensive had been this operation, and feeling a partial responsibility, when I found in the book a mixture of truth and error, I wrote the “pot-pourri” as a kind of *granosalis*. I have already been thanked for furnishing the pinch of salt necessary when using this book, and can assure R.J.S.S.E. that for the future, as far as *one* book-buyer is concerned, it will be a case of “once bit, twice shy.” Perhaps, as they suggest, indignation—when thinking that the 15s. might have been much better spent, say in distributing a few copies of the work of Craik, Newbold, Paul, Leibknecht (not to mention other names)—may have influenced the tone of the article.

There remains the little matter of University Professors and their works. The conclusions of my opponents regarding the trustworthiness of Universities and their inhabitants—based upon a few rare exceptions in Italy, England, and America (and none of these is a professor in Economics)—do not carry conviction. Are my friends familiar with the lives of Marx and Engels; and do they know *when* they formulated the theories which we still use successfully? Not because of, but in spite of, University training, these exceptions have been useful to the working class. And their usefulness to the workers is in *inverse proportion* to the regard paid them by the Universities; when they are ostracised, that usefulness, you may depend upon it, is real. This mediaeval respect for Universities and their products is a little out-of-date—especially when the “products” turn their attention to the social sciences. The best they are then capable of is a “pot-pourri” of facts, tending to confusion unless receiving the theoretical arrangement which Professors seem unable to give.

Yours, Etc., M. S.

It is almost superfluous for us to point the moral of Mark's and R.J.S.S.E.'s Adventures with the Plausible Salesman. With becoming modesty, we content ourselves with referring readers to p. 2 of cover this month, and with pointing out that 15s. would go quite a long way if spent with Us.—Ed. *Plebs*.

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PAST AND PRESENT.

The arid waste of Passion I have roamed
 And suffered there the bitterest of pains ;
 Despair and grief, the folly of blind faith,
 The maddening worship of a lovely wraith,
 Which drove me on to Desolation's shore
 Where acrid tides of Dead Sea breakers foamed.
 But now a fairer sky o'er me is domed ;
 M feet have passed from Passion's burning plains,
 Where Hope's mirage reflected Love's pursuit ;
 Yes, I have passed to Labour's social field
 To taste the wine that rebel strivings yield,
 So health of mind and heart are mine once more ;
 A peace consoles me I ne'er knew before.
 I am at one with all things great and small ;
 I care not now whatever may befall.
 For though my faith in happiness is dead,
 Though fair romance is withered at the root,
 And all the phantom joys I loved are fled ;
 The Fairyland of Beauty still remains :
 The Universe itself, and all that it contains.

F. B. SILVESTER.

News of the Movement

IMPORTANT.—To Secretaries of C.L.C. Plebs Classes (or those run jointly with B.S.P., S.L.P., or I.L.P.) :—We are anxious to publish a Directory of Classes next month. For this we need the following particulars :—Time and place of class, subject, name of teacher or class leader, name and address of class secretary. Will class secretaries please forward these particulars by the 15th inst., without fail ? Unfortunately we do not possess second-sight, and unless we are informed of these details we cannot include them in the list.

The GLASGOW Conference is already bearing good fruit. A. J. Solomons (Sec., Plebs League, Glasgow Branch) writes :—“ By the end of October we expect to have at least twenty classes going. Our Committee have approached the Scottish Labour College Committee to arrange a Conference of the two bodies, with a view to co-ordinating our work and, as far as possible, avoiding any friction. The S.L.C. Committee is also doing valuable work. I understand that they have about ten classes, in addition to their big class in Glasgow (McLean's). So you see our Big Push has started. We are storming the Citadel of Ignorance. (No offence meant to the Clyde area.—Ed.). . . ” A very unsophisticated young male committee member moved that we start a class for women, urging that girls were reluctant to go amongst men. The men on the Committee thought this plausible, but the woman member objected, alleging that a mixed class was an added incentive for girls to attend. A good feature of our classes is that they are largely attended by women.” The following classes have already been formed :—Central Class (50 Renfrew Street) Bridgeton, Dumbarton, Govan, Partick, Clydebank, Shettleston, Parkhead, Rutherglen, Springburn and College. Those desirous of attending classes in Maryhill, Govanhill, and Renfrew Districts, please communicate with Sec., Glasgow Plebs, 12, Binnie Place, Monteith Row, Glasgow.

* * * * *

EDINBURGH, LEITH, ABERDEEN, FALKIRK, and MUSSELBURGH are all going ahead. In Edinburgh, Comrade Stobie (2, Willowbrae Road), has been appointed District Organizer, and will attend T.U. meetings to explain the objects of the League. Jim Nixon (Sec., Edinburgh Plebs) reports :—

" Since we formed the branch the local S.L.P. have formed a public class ; and the I.L.P. have started one for studying History of Trade Unionism. (Later—I hear I.L.P. class is going to join hands with us)." It is to be hoped that in each locality the different organizations will affiliate to the Plebs League, and so co-ordinate the forces working for independence in education. This is much more important than that each individual student should be a member of the Plebs League—a matter which should be left to individual judgment.

The efforts of the N.U.R. in Edinburgh have stimulated the A.S.E. in LEITH. J. Cameron (59, Balfour Street) writes :—" You will soon be hearing of another Plebs class. Members of local A.S.E. branches are active. They are not against joining the N.U.R. class of which Jim Nixon is Sec., but they consider it would strengthen the movement if another class was started." The more the merrier, so long as there is unity of aim !

MUSSELBURGH class, under the leadership of Comrade D. Kilpatrick, has been launched, and already numbers 16 members.

At FALKIRK Murray McCabe is organising a class for the Camelon and Falkirk I.L.P. They are following McManus' advice and " doing it themselves " —*i.e.*, " looking for no outside help in the shape of a class leader." That they are out for the real thing may be judged from Comrade McCabe's letter :—" The only way to meet the W.E.A. criticism about Freedom in Education is simply to ram home the hard, brutal fact of the class war. . . . ' Ye canna mak a silk purse oot o' a soo's lug.' And you cannot make a worker class-consciously by means of a University education. . . ."

The independence of the Scotch is proverbial and to one who is harassed by demands for economics' teachers (as if they grew in every allotment) Falkirk's determination " not to look for outside help," and that of the ABERDEEN class (affiliated to Plebs) to start as a study circle " on its own," comes as a great relief. Economics teachers are about the rarest things on earth, and the aggravating part of it is that we know of more than one wasting his sweetness (?) on the desert air in Flanders and elsewhere. But we hardly think the War Office would release them. The Aberdeen class (A. J. Deans, 13, Orchard Place) is making a start with Craik's book.

From the North of England Branch C.L.C. comes a healthy report. Will Lawther writes :—" One of the most remarkable Conferences ever held in NEWCASTLE ' was the verdict of one of the old guard on that held on September 29th. A resolution was moved by C. T. Cramp, Pres. Elect. N.U.R., and seconded by Sydney Jones, C. C. Blackwood, Mon., urging the affiliation to the C.L.C. of the 187 Trade Union organizations, Co-operative Societies, etc. that were represented, and this was carried unanimously." Lawther, who was in the chair, gave a clear lead for a definite policy with regard to working-class education, and this was followed up—with interest—by the other speakers. C. T. Cramp well expressed the aim of our movement when he said : " We do not want to cover our chains with roses ; we want to break them. The object of the Labour College is to give the Labour Movement a clear-cut point of view of its own position and worth, that will enable it to cast off the shackles." Some 50 Trade Union Branches are now linked up with this vigorous C.L.C. district, and a Cleveland and district branch has now been added as a result of a Conference addressed by Will Lewcock at Middlesbro' on September 8th, with Mr. Allen (N.U.R.) in the chair. Sydney Jones followed up his good work at Newcastle with meetings at Chopwell, Consett, South Ashington, and Walbottle. Classes are now in full swing at Newcastle (3), Ashington, South Shields, Wallsend, Chopwell, Consett, Middlesbro', Cranlington, and Burnhope, with more to follow. If there are any Plebeians who want to get in touch, the Secretary is—T. F. Ethell, 76, James Street, Newcastle.*

* See, also, for news of the C.L.C. movement in Durham, the letter from " Ex-Forwardite " in this month's Correspondence.

If only economics teachers had been put on the list of reserved occupations life would be simpler for us, if not for them. We have had requests for them during the last week from LEIGH, Lancs. (J. Meyckle, 22, Orchard Lane) where a class has been formed; and also from LIVERPOOL, where Comrade E. Jones is doing his best to start a class. The Liverpool District Council, N.U.R., are anxious to run classes, too, if only the needed teacher turns up. The next best thing to a teacher is a good text-book—and if these demands continue a special N.U.R. train will convey a deputation of delegates from classes to Mardy (Rhondda), there to demand of Noah Ablett either his *Easy Outlines* or his life!

* * * * *

Geo. Peet reports from MANCHESTER that three classes are being organized—in Openshaw, Salford, and Stockport; and a propaganda committee has been formed to take charge. . . . Moston Socialist Society (affiliated to Plebs League) are arranging a Conference of local branches of Trade Union and Labour Organizations on Sunday, November 4th, 7.30, in the Club Room, Co-operative Hall, Lightbourne Road, in order to start classes. . . . WIGAN and WARRINGTON have also started work, and A. E. Seabury reports of the latter:—"We have an average attendance of thirty, which is growing weekly, and you may expect to learn later of our progress well up towards 100. First six lectures will deal with Social Science, to be followed by lectures on Labour Economics—all C.L.C., unadulterated." The teacher is J. H. Potter, who has gallantly stepped into the breach caused by the loss of Robt. Holder. All these classes, together with the "old firm" at ROCHDALE, prove that Lancashire is still to the fore.*

* * * * *

Not to be outdone by the red rose, Yorkshire has blossomed forth during the last month amazingly. SHEFFIELD has two classes already, both going strong. The first, under the auspices of the Trades Council, the United Socialist Committee, and the District Council, N.U.R., has for tutor Fred Shaw, who is also conducting classes at HALIFAX and HUDDERSFIELD. For these classes, Comrade Shaw has drawn up a most interesting syllabus (see "Bookshelf" and "Plebs Publications"). The other Sheffield class is organized by the Workers' Committee, and will have as tutors J. T. Murphy and S. E. Airey. Chas. Watkins (N.U.R.), who is Acting Secretary for Fred Shaw's class, says:—"Although our two classes started independently, there will be the closest sympathy and co-operation between them. In fact, many students will attend both classes. The Trades Council, N.U.R. Dist. Council, and United Socialist Committee have endorsed the movement, and accepted financial responsibility for any expenditure not met by students' fees. Sheffield has been rather late in starting, but I believe it will make good now. South Wales and the Clyde will need to keep their eyes on us." We may remark that Sheffield has a good working-class record in history, and has been before now in the forefront of progressive movements. Play up, Sheffield! Intending students and Plebeians should communicate with C. Watkins, Orgreave, Handsworth (for Fred Shaw's class) and E. Lismer, 56, Rushdale Road, Meersbrook (for J. T. Murphy's class). A line or two from a letter of Fred Shaw's may be quoted here:—"The underlying motive (of the lecture-course) is to kill the static viewpoint, with its current ideology and limitations; and to introduce the dynamic view, attempting, at any rate, to unshackle the imagination. Let the students live for a while in the struggles of the past, and feel that, after all, they are part and parcel of the dynamic forces of social development. If I can do that, then there is no fear of the students falling back upon bourgeois political ideals and methods. A new ideology is in the making, and the C.L.C., as an organization apart from the present Socialist bodies, is the method and tool for that purpose."

* As we go to press comes a letter from G. Holt, OLDHAM, announcing the formation of a Works class, which "is going to be a bigger affair in due course." Good luck!

The BIRMINGHAM Plebs League has elected E. R. Robinson as Secretary. Comrade Robinson believes in the uses of advertisement, and is the champion of the Plebs Movement for roping in new subscribers. The King's Norton and Stirchley Branch of the Plebs League has a Social Science class, which meets every Wednesday, 8 to 10, at the Friends Hall, Watford Road. Subjects:—Working Class Industrial History and Marxian Economics. The local T.U. Branches and Women Workers' Federation have been circularised—we hope with success.

* * * * *

Apropos of women workers. A recent report of the Mid-Rhondda class in the Merthyr *Pioneer* contained the following:—"We are very pleased to see the women taking interest in the classes. No movement can be regarded as a success unless the women will help." Let us add that in view of recent developments in industry uneducated (and mis-educated) women are a menace to the Labour Movement, and every effort should be made to get them to attend the classes. New classes have been started at Ferndale, Ynyshir, and Bargoed. Mark Starr says that we shall have to enlarge the magazine if we intend to publish a directory of South Wales Classes. They spring up on all sides, and are flourishing like the green bay tree. The South Wales *Echo* is getting alarmed about them. In an article on October 11th, it voices its suspicions of "what are termed classes in economics"—being very evidently anxious to suggest (though it doesn't dare do so) that Bolo has something or other to do with them. "A number of colliery workers in the locality," it announces, "are organizing an opposition campaign, and application has already been made for the attendance of such well-known members of Parliament as Mr. W. Brace, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Lord Beresford, Mr. John Hodge, and Mr. G. H. Roberts." We hope the application will be successful. Hodge on "The Identity of Interests of Capital and Labour," or Roberts on "Independence in Working-Class Representation," should be a good "draw" in the Rhondda.

* * * * *

We had hoped to be able to devote a little space to the public debate between Mark Starr and Mr. W. Harris (Sec. Trades Council) at Merthyr, on October 7th, on the question—"Should a T.U. financially support *technical* education?" But news of the movement this month has already overrun its allotted space, and we must content ourselves with remarking that the debate—and the preceding and subsequent discussion on the subject in the columns of the *Pioneer*—has kept the subject of education and what the workers want from it, well to the fore in South Wales recently.

* * * * *

Last, but not least, LONDON is awakening—or being awakened. Frank Jackson (late of Rochdale) has already started his class at ERITH, in the A.S.E. Institute, Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.; sec., W. Wright, 14, Alford Road, Erith. He reports "attendance at opening meeting satisfactory, and the students full of enthusiasm."

EAST HAM, where "the other" Frank Jackson (of London) is organizing classes, has had a successful Conference. Forty-seven Trade Union, I.L.P., B.S.P., and Women's Organizations were represented, and a Committee formed. Classes are to be held on Sundays, beginning October 21st, and will be affiliated to the London District Plebs. The Sec. is Miss K. E. Read, 85, Central Park Road, E. 6.

London Dist. Council, N.U.R., after conferring with a delegation from the London Plebs, have decided to ask the Governors of the Labour College for permission to use the College rooms for two classes a week. In the event of this permission being received, classes will be started at once under the joint auspices of the Plebs and N.U.R. A class has also been started at St. Pancras, and we hope some inter-connection will be possible between this and the other N.U.R. classes.

A Committee of Trade Unionists has arranged to run classes in the William Morris Hall, WALTHAMSTOW, beginning Sunday, November 4th, 11 a.m. The class conductor is John Dawson.

Review

ANOTHER USEFUL PAMPHLET.

Labour's Final Weapon—Industrial Unionism. By C. H. STAVENHAGEN (President, Electrical T.U., London District). (From 96, Elthorne Park Road, Hanwell, London, W. 7. 4d.)

Though all Industrial Unionists may not agree with every part of this pamphlet, it is nevertheless a useful and interesting one. It is divided into twenty-eight chapters, the first five being devoted to a historical account of Craft Unionism. The table on p. 9, giving the number of existing unions within the Engineering, Shipbuilding and Metal, Building, Printing, Mining and Quarrying, Transport, and Textile industries, is calculated to make any intelligent trade unionist gasp, and should help him to realise the seriousness of the position. Another useful propagandist feature is the tabulated statement on p. 14 of the respective aims and objects of the Craft Union and the Industrial Union; although here, there is a certain amount of confusion between "Parliamentary" and "Political" action.

I should like to point out a historical error which occurs on p. 13:—"In a sense, the Industrial Union is the child of the Craft Union, *in the same way that the Craft Union was itself the product of the old Guild system and ordinary working-class associations.*" Now the Guild system was a product of semi-Feudal conditions, and its existence was limited to the transition stage between Feudalism and Capitalism. Not until the "composite" labourers had been herded together and converted into "detail" labourers could *working-class associations* come into being. The Guild was an expression of private property; the working-class association is the expression of a commodity relation (Labour-power).

There is an economic error a few pages later:—"Taking 1895 as the basis, *the sovereign then being worth 20s., in 1897 it was worth 19s. 3d., in 1900, 18s. 5d., &c.*" A student of *Capital* would not have slipped into this mistake. Money itself has no price—£1 = a sovereign or 20s. What has actually happened is that the purchasing power of a sovereign has decreased, the number of commodities that could be bought for it in 1895 needing more than a sovereign to purchase them in 1897.

A striking feature of most new propagandists of Industrial Unionism is their desire to create new divisions and parcel them out in "apple-pie" order. This is presumably due to the progress made within the last few years by the Workshop Committee. But these Committees are only in the stage of infancy, and have a hard and rugged road to travel yet. One false step may bring about a temporary downfall from which it will take some time to recover. The first essential is that the outlook of the worker, by constant propaganda, must be changed. The changing conditions inside the workshop will eventually find expression outside. When the Workers' Committees are firmly established the Trade Union Branch will become an Industrial Branch, the Trade Union District Committee an Industrial District Committee, the Trades Council an Industrial Council, and the Trades Congress an Industrial

Congress. It is in the workshop that working-class grievances arise, and it is here also that the workers have the power to remove them; but it is through their branches and Councils that they will find political expression.

I recommend this booklet to all students of the structure and problems of Trade Unionism. It seems to me an honest attempt to face those problems, and as such—despite points open to criticism—it is worthy of thoughtful study.

FRANK JACKSON.

The *Plebs* Bookshelf

The *Times* (September 29th) had a column of extracts from an article by Kautsky in *Die Neue Zeit* for September 14th on "the whole question of the future of Belgium and the position of small States." Herr Kautsky's views—since in this one respect they happen to agree with those of the *Times*—are described as "thorough and profound." He is opposed to any annexation of Belgium; to the German scheme for the separation of Flemings and Walloons; and to any form of "neutrality" imposed upon Belgium from without (here, of course, he is arguing against the German Majority Socialists). With regard to the general question of the existence of small States, Kautsky holds that the view of the Majority Socialists that small States must be "absorbed" by large ones is a pseudo-Marxist fallacy—a false analogy from the economic tendency towards concentration and syndication. He argues that the splitting-up of a great State into small ones would be a retrograde step (the *Times* emphasises this, in view of "German attempts to divide the British Empire"—but does not refer to Entente designs with regard to Austria-Hungary). He declares that—

the present war is a fight not merely between different imperialisms, but also between imperialism and democracy, between more or less democratic and more or less imperialist and militarist States. . . . The end of the war seems, in spite of everything, to be going to signify the collapse of imperialism and a mighty advance of democracy—if not yet the complete victory of the proletariat.

The Majority Socialists, by the way, have—since the publication of this article—ousted Kautsky from the editorial chair of the *Neue Zeit*, a position he had held since its foundation some 30 years ago. The *Neue Zeit* without Kautsky will be . . . well, perhaps Scheidemann, David & Co. want something more after the style of the *Clarion*.

* * * * *

Readers of *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* and other proletarian "fiction" will note with interest the publication of *The Fields of the Fatherless*, by Jean Roy, a domestic servant, previously a barmaid and a tailoress. According to the reviews, the book deals ("with great simplicity, directness, and sincerity") with life as lived by the majority of the inhabitants of the West of Scotland—in discomfort, crowding, and squalor in back streets and alleys. When the publishers bring out a cheaper edition (what irony that a servant girl's story of her life should be issued at 6s. net!) I hope they'll let the *Plebs* know.

A paragraph in the *Daily News* recently on *Rhymes and Records*, by Alexander Stephen (Headley, 1s. net) opened with a reference to "Poetry that comes out of the heart of democracy, breaking from a man's soul as the machine of life grinds him to powder," and went on to urge workers to acquaint themselves with the writings of "a true worker's poet." Stephen's poems unquestionably arouse one's sympathy, but they are disappointing if one goes to them expecting to find any note of class-consciousness or of revolt. In that sense he is certainly no "true worker's poet." Certain phrases in the Introduction (by E. H. Moore)—"note of resignation," "insistent memories of the past," "no nude feeling," "his gentle art," "wondering, pathetic note"—sufficiently indicate the chief characteristics of his verse. Here are a line or two:—

"When we are young, before us
 Fair lies the path untrod. . . .
 'When we are old, behind us
 How fair again they seem—
 Through tears that almost blind us—
 The joy, the hope, the dream!"

"Life had cozened him," says his Introducer, "but he made no complaint." Had he done so, my own feeling is, he would have been more of a "true workers' poet." . . . But then he would hardly have referred to his work as a "wee bookie."

* * * * *

Another recent publication of Headley's which aroused my interest was *Poets of the Democracy*, by G. Currie Martin (1s. 6d. net)—though the pretty-pretty portrait of Burns on the cover chilled me as soon as I got hold of it. The book has been largely reprinted from the pages of *One and All*, the organ of the Adult School Movement; and the tepid, vaguely "spiritual," harmless note of the Adult School Movement (or much of it) runs through every chapter. Democracy is nothing more definite than "a spirit and an atmosphere"; and the author's examples of "the democratic ideal in literature" include militant democrats like the writer of *Piers Plowman*, the Corn Law Rhymers, Whitman, and Carpenter; poets like Goldsmith, Cowper, Crabbe, and Wordsworth, who happened to write about "humble" themes (the author does not mention that Wordsworth, in later life, was a "disillusioned" old Tory); and certain Colonial singers like Bliss Carman, Adam Lindsay Gordon, R. W. Service, &c., who, though they may be "sick of roofs and floors," or keen on "the simple things, the true things, the silent men who do things," are not necessarily democrats. All the same, I am indebted to the author for the chapter on the Corn Law Rhymers (though, of course, he complacently observes, with regard to Ebenezer Elliott's bitter poems, that "hatred can never accomplish divine work, and it is false to suppose it to be the true basis upon which something nobler and better can be builded"); and for his description of a living poet, W. W. Gibson's writings, the inspiration of much of which is "drawn from the heart of the working classes"—from the lives of fisher-folk, agricultural labourers, miners, ironworkers, railway men, and so forth. (Gibson's poems—*Daily Bread*, *Stonefolds*, *Livelihood*—are mostly published by Elkin Matthews at 1s. a volume). The most inexplicable omission from these *Poets of the Democracy* is William Morris; Francis Adams, too, is not even mentioned.

The compiler of *A Word-Book of the English Tongue* (Routledge, 1s. 6d. net) is evidently something of a crank. It is all very well to aim, in one's speech and writing, at avoiding cumbrous "Latinisms" and expressing oneself in simple—Anglo-Saxon—phraseology. But if one's aim in so doing be not simply simplicity, it is probably pedantry. This compiler is a pedant—and a cranky one. You will observe that he calls his work a "word-book"—"dictionary" being a nasty "foreign" word; also, that it is a *Wordbook of the English Tongue*—not language. His gospel is the total prohibition ("forbiddance" he would say) of "loan-words"; *i.e.*, words borrowed from other languages—I mean tongues—and not of "the olden Saxon Tongue." He has chosen in this book a few thousand "loan-words," and "sets by the side of each, not indeed synonyms (! ! !) but other good English words, which may stand in their stead." Thus—to take a few random examples—you should not say "poet," but "scald" or "songster"; not "period," but "span" or "spell"; not "prison," but "lock-up"; and not "Plebeian," but "self-made," "small," "cheap," "earthly," "foul," "lousy"—or several other vivid Anglo-Saxon words! You must never "promise to be candid but not impartial"; but must "swear to be blunt but not listless." You may feel that this does not quite express your meaning—but meaning be blowed, so long as you're Anglo-Saxon. You may prefer "Agitate, Educate, Organize" to "Make things hum, Lick into shape, Set up"—but that is only a sign (a "showing") of your perverted ("marred") taste. You may also wonder why so true-blue a Saxon as our author sticks a Latin motto on his title-page; and why D.O.R.A. doesn't say something to him for being so disrespectful to an Ally as to use "glaringly French" as a term of opprobrium ("mud-slinging," as he would put it). . . . But if you can't "Damn" his book, you have his permission to "blast" it!

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The S.L. Press have earned the thanks of all propagandists by their reprint of Connolly's *Socialism Made Easy* (S.L.P., 50, Renfrew Street, Glasgow. 2d.). I'm inclined to think it's one of the best "beginner's" pamphlets ever written—(Section 1, "Workshop Talks," that is. Section 2, "Political Action of Labour," is meat for more "advanced" stomachs, and is surely one of the classics of Industrial Unionist literature). Those founding discussion-classes or study-circles could not do better than start with it. By the way, has this reprint been done on one of those new machines the S.L. Press has been acquiring? It is the best bit of printing and typography they've turned out, and—at present cost of paper—wonderful value for money.

* * * * *

A letter received the other day from a Plebeian Somewhere in France makes me think that not until you get into khaki do you really have time to do some reading. The list of books on Industrial and General History, as well as poetry and fiction, which he gives as his recent record, makes a mere civilian envious. He wants (a sound suggestion) more articles like those on the Luddites which Mainwaring did for us recently—*e.g.*, something on the Chartists—on men like Cooper and Elliott. Also a series of short studies of such writers as Ibsen, Nietzsche, Shaw, Tolstoy. "It sometimes strikes

me," he writes, "that there's too much contentious discussion in *Plebs*, and not enough permanently helpful stuff." Well, that's sound, straight criticism—contributors, please note. He strongly recommends, by the way—as a general introduction to its subjects—*A Handbook of Modern European History, 1789–1917*, by S. E. Maltby (Headley's, inter-leaved edition, 2s. net).

* * * * *

I see that our old friend, W. H. Mallock, is publishing a new book this autumn entitled *The Limits of Pure Democracy*. Let us charitably hope that this will not approach so near to the Limit of Pure Fatuity as some of his previous works. I notice also a new edition announced of *An Introduction to English Industrial History*, by H. Allsopp, B.A., late Vice-Principal, Ruskin College, Oxford. It costs 2s. 6d., or nearly twice as much as Craik's and Mark Starr's put together. . . . No more need be said.

* * * * *

O. Henry has been Specially Recommended in these pages before. I have just been chuckling over *Options*; particularly over the story entitled "The Moment of Victory." If you haven't already invested in *Options*, get it soon, and read this little discussion of the motives which lead men to seek "the bubble, reputation, even in the cannon's mouth"—cannon's larynx, as the narrator of the story puts it. Here is one man's explanation of his motives:—

"I'll tell you why I'm trying for promotion. . . . A major gets more pay than a captain, and I need the money."

And another man's comment:—

"Correct for you," says I. "I can understand that. *Your* system of fame-seeking is rooted in the deepest soil of patriotism."

The whole story, and its point of view as regards "bloodshed, laurels, ambition, and all other forms of military glory," is as refreshingly prosaic and non-heroic as *Arms and the Man*.

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From C. H. Stavenhagen, 96, Elthorne Park Road, Hanwell, London, W. 7.

If C.L.C.'ers were still "in residence," and the Penywern Road Repertory Company still active, we should certainly have to consider the production of *Demarcation*: A Tragi-Comedy in One Act, by W. F. Watson (Nat. Metal, Engineering & Shipbuilding Amalgamation Committee, 8, Featherstone Buildings, Holborn, London, W.C. 2. Price 2d.). It is short, but it "gets there." The persons of the drama are Sir Albert Vickstrong, John Brownarm, and William Beardless, directors of the Universal Lid Supply Co., Ltd.; George Speediman, Works Manager; and James Tinkster and Fred B. Hodgson, representatives respectively of the Amalgamated Society of Operative Kettle-Lid Makers, and the National Association of Operative Saucepan-Lid Makers. The worst of producing the play would be that the "stage directions" would be lost, and Watson, like G.B.S., makes the most of those stage directions. Tinkster, for example, is described as "a florid-complexioned, portly, old-fashioned Trade Unionist, well into his fifties—one of the 'gone-grey-in-the-movement,' 'used-to-sing-the-Red-Flag-when-you-were-a-baby' type. . . ." Hodgson, of the Saucepan-Lid Association, is "a slim, pale-faced, studious young man in his early thirties." He was gifted with more than average intelligence, so "the Members of his Union sent him to Ruskin College," after leaving which "he continued his studies under the auspices of the W.E.A., eventually developing into a profound snob with an ambition to make officialism his career." (He, of course, is very keen on the recommendations of the Whitley Report.) You should read for yourself how the great Demarcation Dispute—relating to the making of coffee-pot lids—was settled. As Watson pungently observes in his Foreword, "Volumes could be filled with the utter absurdity of some of the demarcation disputes, but paper is too expensive just now." His is not a very bulky "volume"—and the Tragi-Comedy barely fills half of it—but, if only for its freshness of treatment, it is well worthy of a place on one's pamphlet shelf.

* * * * *

The Syllabus drawn up by Fred Shaw for the use of the Halifax, Huddersfield & Sheffield classes is what they call in those parts a "champion" piece of work. The subject is "Marxism: Fundamentals of Social Evolution," and a synopsis of each of the twenty-four lectures, with list of books for reference, is given. The subject-titles (some of them have more than one lecture devoted to them) are The (Historical) Method, Organic Evolution, Animal and Human Society, Primitive Man, Early Human Society (1st Fundamental—The Family; 2nd Fundamental—Private Property), Early Historic Period (3rd Fundamental—The State) Greek Society, Roman Society, Towards Feudalism, Feudalism, Social Evolution in England, The Venetian Republic, Revolts in the Middle Ages, Towards Modern Concepts, Modern Institutions, Capitalism, Present Fallacies, The Transition. The book-lists make one's mouth water. One glances down these titles and realises how many volumes there are one had *meant* to buy . . . and read. . . . If this is a catalogue of Fred Shaw's library, then I'd like to spend a few week-ends with him. The Plebs Publication Department (see particulars on another page) has done wisely in ordering a supply of this Syllabus. And Plebeians everywhere will do wisely to invest 2½d. in a copy. As a guide book to books alone, it is well worth the money.

According to the literary announcements, Mr. Joseph Keating, who "has made a reputation as a writer about life in the Welsh colliery districts," has published a new novel. Have any Plebeian inhabitants of Welsh colliery districts come across any of Mr. Keating's work, and have they found it worth while? Also, has anybody read anything by that other Welsh "realist," Mr. Caradoc Evans, about whom some of the reviews have much to say? Welshmen (and the inhabitants of Lanarkshire and of the Tyne area) should also watch for a cheap edition of Upton Sinclair's latest—*King Coal*. Dr. Georg Brandes has somewhere been comparing it to Zola's *Germinal*. . . . Plebeians who saw *Where is He?*, the one-act play with a Welsh-colliery district background, produced by the Horniman Co., may be interested to know that it is now obtainable in book form (Shakespeare Head Press, 1s. net). . . . And while we're "in Wales," so to speak, we may as well refer to Lady Mond's suggestion at Swansea recently that Shakespeare's plays ought to be translated and performed in Welsh. Her ladyship urged that, "as Shakespeare was the greatest poet and dramatist of the Tudor reign, and as the Tudors were of Welsh origin, it would be most fitting that his work should be staged in the Cymric tongue." Most fitting! I confidently expect some bright spirit to step forward next and urge that, as Shakespeare was a contemporary of Sir Walter Raleigh, and as Sir Walter "discovered" tobacco, smoking should be encouraged in all theatres where Shakespeare is being performed.

* * * * *

The *Manifesto* of the Lanarkshire Miners' Reform Committee is an exceedingly interesting leaflet—an able statement of the case for industrial organization. Obtainable from Geo. Russell, 20, Clark Street, Blantyre, Lanarkshire.

* * * * *

Hyndman's *Economics of Socialism* is now being offered by the 20th Century Press (37-38, Clerkenwell Green, E.C.), at 1s., stiff covers. Single copies, 1s. 4d., post free; One dozen for 10s., carriage 1s. 6d. extra.

Will any Plebeians who would care for a cloth-bound copy of Craik's *Modern Working-Class Movement* send a p.c. to W. T. A. Foot, 119, Harvist Road, West Kilburn, N.W. 6. (Probable price 2s. or 2s. 6d.). . . Single copies of Craik's book can be obtained from us (7½d., post paid). Orders for quantities should be sent, *with cash*, to Mr. Foot. J.F.H.

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